

CALLINGTON IN 1913.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT.

At last Monday's meeting of Callington Urban Council, Dr. H. Davis, jun., presented his annual report as Medical Officer of Health, as follows:—

The district consists of 2,492 acres, with a population of 1,713, living in 434 houses, an average of four persons per house. The social conditions during the year show very little alteration, and there is little in my report which calls for special notice.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The number of births registered in the district was 22, 11 males and 11 females, a birth rate of 12.8 per 1,000 per annum; this is the lowest on record, and compares unfavourably with the county rate of 19.9, but this year is exceptional, the previous ten years maintaining a very fair average. The number of deaths was 19, 8 males and 11 females, a rate of 11, and as is frequently the case the first three months of the year produced the highest mortality, 10 deaths occurring during this period; to this must be added one transferable death, of a resident, occurring in the County Asylum, bringing up the total to 20, with a corrected death rate of 11.6, and, compared with the county rate of 13.7, is very satisfactory, and still maintains the high standard of previous years. Twenty-two births and twenty deaths, give a natural increase of 2. The ages at death were as follows:—Under 1 year, 2; 2 and under 5, 1; 25 and under 45, 1; 45 and under 65, 6; 65 and upwards, 10. Of the deaths over 65 one occurred at 69, four between 73 and 75, and five between 80 and 88. The causes of death were as follows:—Whooping cough, 2; phthisis, 2; respiratory diseases, 5; cancer, 3; heart disease, 2; other causes, 6. There were two inquest cases.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

Two deaths occurred under one year, one being due to convulsions, and in the other case whooping cough was the primary cause. The proportion of deaths under one year per 1,000 births was equal to 90.9.

ZYMOTIC DEATH RATE.

There was no death from any disease notifiable in this district under the Infectious Disease (Notification) Act.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The following have been notified — typhoid fever, 1; scarlet fever, 1; diphtheria, 1; erysipelas, 2. The most careful investigation of these cases failed to discover their origin, or, with the exception of an imperfectly trapped gully near one house, to trace them to any sanitary defects; importation, however, was not improbable in one or two cases. The usual precautions were taken, and that there was no further spread of the diseases and all terminated in recovery must be regarded as very satisfactory.

Under the Public Health (Tuberculosis) Regulations, one case of pulmonary phthisis has been notified.

Whooping cough and German measles were prevalent during the early months of the year. In October measles was imported, but fortunately at a place where isolation was easy, and I am not aware of any further development. The district is without an Isolation Hospital, and there is no disinfecting apparatus. Rooms are fumigated and disinfectants supplied by the Sanitary Authority when necessary.

SEWERAGE.

No structural changes or extension of the sewers have been necessary. Five large iron street gullies have been fixed; two altered in position and a large mason's trap has been constructed at Newport, where the storm water is at times excessive. Two ventilation shafts have been repaired, and one raised in height. The sewer outfalls at Newport are satisfactory, and the one in Frogwell-road has been improved; the diversion of this outfall has been discussed, but at present is not regarded as necessary.

DRAINAGE.

Twelve houses have had their drains reconstructed with the necessary gullies and ventilation shafts, and 10 new w.c.'s have been built. Ten drains have become blocked during the year, and some of them quite new, well-laid drains that with proper care and use should never have given the slightest trouble; the cause was discovered in the material removed, that nothing but great carelessness could have allowed to enter the drains.

WATER SUPPLY.

The drought of exceptional duration was a severe test of our water supplies; several private wells soon became dry, and remained so for many weeks. The public supplies at Pipe Well and other places became very low, but maintained a small stream. The Waterworks Company, by careful storage of water from its gradually diminishing sources, managed to give the town a full pressure supply for a few hours a day to the end of the drought. The water main enters the town at its lowest point, from whence its branches ascend the steep hill into the town. Consumers taking advantage of the limited period of supply, drew water freely, the pressure being thereby greatly reduced; the result was that while those at the lower levels got far more than their share, in fact, little short of a constant supply, others at the higher levels were less fortunate. Thus complaints of insufficient supply are easily understood, but these were few indeed. As regards quality, I have made many analyses during the year with satisfactory results.

TRADE PREMISES.

Few defects have been found in the workshops and workplaces. Want of cleanliness and limewashing are those most frequently observed; in two cases the sanitary arrangements have required attention.

Bakehouses are in a satisfactory condition. Two slaughter-houses are in use; one of these has been rebuilt during the year, and is excellent in every respect.

Dairies on the whole are satisfactory, but some cowsheds and their surroundings are still defective, and have required numerous inspections and some formal notices. There are 40 places on the register that are kept under observation.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES.

There are no unoccupied cottages, and the population is constant. We might therefore infer that the supply is equal to the demand. This may be so numerically, but cottages of a better class are unquestionably desirable. No new houses have been built, but plans for four new cottages, as well as a motor garage, have been deposited and approved by the Council during the year.

HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING ACT—TABULAR STATEMENT.

Dwelling houses inspected	120
Dwelling houses unfit for habitation.....	1
Representation to Local Authority, with view to closing order	1
Number of closing orders made	1

GENERAL CHARACTER OF DEFECTS FOUND TO EXIST:

Choked drains	10
Defective w.c.'s	11
Offensive accumulations	5
Overshielding	1
General repairs	20
Damp walls 12, roofs 4	16

The damp walls have been improved, and the other defects rectified in a satisfactory manner.

SCAVENGING AND HOUSE REFUSE.

The Authority is responsible for this work, which is done by contract; the scavenger fulfilling the various duties efficiently and well. About 140 ashbins and boxes are cleared weekly, and I have to repeat what I stated in my last report, that far too many are of a bad and unsanitary type, and although this has been frequently explained to the owners the improvements are not sufficiently rapid. This matter is now receiving your consideration. Nuisances occur more or less frequently, and the majority are dealt with informally.

BY-LAWS, REPORTS, ETC.

The amount of general work done during the year is well up to the average; the only particular development being the new sidewalk in the Launceston-road, which is not only a protection to the children attending the new Council School, but a great improvement to this approach to the town. The Sanitary Committee have met regularly, and by their efforts the Council have been relieved of a great amount of work. The following by-laws are in force in the district, viz.:—With regard to nuisances, new buildings, slaughter-houses and dairies and cowsheds. The Infectious Disease (Notification) Act, 1889, and Part III Public Health (Amendment) Act, 1890, have been adopted.

